



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Cut Bank Sportsman Association (CBSA)

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Convert an abandoned race car track into an Outdoor Shooting Range, which would include rifle and pistol ranges, access road, and designated parking area.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The proposed Shooting Range will be 3 miles southwest of Cut Bank, in Glacier County, MT at 48°36'20.29"N, 112°21'24.49"W (See Map 1). The property is owned by the City of Cut Bank and Glacier County and is controlled by the Cut Bank Airport Authority. A long term lease has been granted to the CBSA to establish and manage a shooting range on the site.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
- (ii) may not limit the number of members;*
- (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
- (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s): The current CBSA range is on located 8 miles from town with the last portion on a rugged dirt road. The range road is not accessible in bad weather, and in winter blowing snow often blocks the entrance gate. The range is also not handicapped accessible compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for accessibility. The lease on this current CBSA range terminates in 2014 and will not be renewed.

To continue to offer shooting sports opportunities to the Cut Bank community there is a need for a new range location with improved safety features, having better year around access, and being ADA compliant.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): Develop a new improved shooting range, with easy access that meets the standards of safety and handicapped accessibility.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:



Map 1—Proposed Range Site on Old Race Track off of the Valley Highway 3 southwest of Cut Bank, MT.



Map 2- Aerial view of old race track, site for the new CBSA shooting Range



Figures 1 and 2 – Area needing to be cleaned of debris and weeds for proposed range site.

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected: The approximate size of the proposed old race track site is 6.8 acres. The pit area is about 150 yards x 220 yards and a new rifle & pistol range will be located within that “pit” area.

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): The proposed project is on an old race car track (See maps 1), just east of the Cut Bank Airport. Consequently the area has been significantly altered for a number of years through construction and use of the race track. The altered or disturbed area(s) can be easily seen in the aerial photo labeled map 2.

10. Description of Project: There are two parts to the funding request: 1) to modify the race track into a shooting range and 2) clean up the area and moving earth.

The shooting area for the proposed range is an oval pit approximately 150 yards wide and 220 yards long. The pit must be cleaned out of old tires, weeds and other debris (See figures 1 & 2). The old race car track had had sloped 20-30 feet tall. Once cleaned the east and west end of the oval pit will be dozed and the sloping track reshaped to form new safety berms. An area will also be prepared for a gated entry, a parking area, and a access road. This road will also serve as maintenance access.

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2011.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
None	

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 8,000

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

FWP Hunter Education and Bow Hunter Education Programs, 4-H Clubs and other shooting organizations from Shelby, Conrad, Valier, Choteau and Chester.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club, the Cut Bank Airport Authority, and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Mike Boyd, 417 Circle Drive, Cut Bank, Mt 59427, 799-5945

16. Other Pertinent Information: Future plans for the CBSA are to have a shooting complex offering rifle and pistol ranges, archery range and trap ranges.

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 22, 2010.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist--The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. (An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments

4. The old race track has been heavily compacted in places and vegetation is sparse made up of a few grasses and noxious weeds.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments

7. Relocating and improving the CBSA range will improve the quality of the shooting sports within the community.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?

This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

The proposed alternative A and alternative B (the no action alternative) were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** to provide a shooting range grant to Cut Bank Sportsman Association (CBSA) for the purpose described in Part I, paragraph (section) 10 (Description of Project) Clean up the old race track and move earth for a new shooting range with year around access.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** FWP Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area might remain an abandoned race car track and the CBSA range would remain on current leased properties until 2014.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Two alternatives have been considered, **A** (Proposed Alternative) and **B** (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (**A**) nor the no action alternative (**B**) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)**: better year around access to the range and additional parking, improved range safety and facility, and potential for future growth of the range on the long-term leased properties.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not provide FWP funds for improving a new range site.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations): NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Edgardo Gierbolini, P.O. Box 114, Cut Bank, MT 59427

Mike Boyd, 417 Circle Drive, Cut Bank, Mt 59427

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of this proposal have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. No part of the proposal reviewed was complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties owned by the City of Cut Bank and Glacier County, and controlled by the Cut Bank Airport Authority. The low impact activities proposed to continue, and the increased recreational opportunity, all indicate that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with conversion of the old race car track to a new improved shooting range. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the expansion proposals outlined in Part I paragraphs (sections) 2 & 10.

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(M.S. Wildlife Management)
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: August 1, 2010

Approved By FWP: August 30, 2010

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Pioneer Press and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website. Additionally the EA will also be available for review on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website. The comment period ends at 5:00 PM on September 17, 2010.